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No. 363

LOVE'S SERVICE FLAG

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

BY

HILLIARD BOOTH

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LOVE'S SERVICE FLAG

CHARACTERS

MRS. DEWITT RALEIGH.....*A Society Woman*
MADELEINE RALEIGH.....*Her Daughter*
FAITH EVANS.....*Madeleine's Friend*
LETETIA BUTTS.....*A Spinster*
FIFI D'ANVERS.....*From France*
MARTHA DAWSON.....*A Widow*
CLARA.....*A Maid*
MAJOR ANDERSON.....*An Army Surgeon*
GERALD VAN ZANDT.....*A Collegian*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: *Living-Room in the DEWITT RALEIGH'S Home.*

ACT II: *The Same. Afternoon of the same day.*

PLACE: *A Suburb of New York City.*

TIME: *A Day of the Present.*

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

MRS. DEWITT RALEIGH. A handsome, middle-aged matron, dressed youthfully in a fashionable house-gown. A woman of refinement.

MADELEINE RALEIGH. An attractive girl of twenty years, independent in spirit. In Act I she wears first an afternoon frock, and later an army uniform of khaki. During Act II she dons the costume of Columbia.

FAITH EVANS. A pretty girl of eighteen years, frivolous and light-headed, but lovable. She wears a street-dress, with hat and coat.

LETETIA BUTTS. An elderly and unattractive spinster, who wants to mother the whole U. S. Army. She wears glasses. She dresses in a fussy, but unbecoming dress, and wears hat at entrance.

FIFI D'ANVERS. A chic and charming French girl of sixteen years; speaks with a French accent. She wears an extremely modish skirt with very short skirt. Wears a large picture hat at entrance. During Act II she dons a costume representative of France.

MARTHA DAWSON. A poor, middle-aged widow with an etherial face. She wears shabby black and a shawl. She has a medal pinned on her waist.

CLARA. A young and attractive Irish house-maid. Wears maid's dress of black, with white cap and apron. At the end of Act II she appears in a yellow silk dress and plumed hat.

MAJOR ANDERSON. A good-looking and serious-minded man of thirty years. He wears the regulation U. S. Army uniform of khaki.

GERALD VAN ZANDT. A boyish and likable fellow of twenty-one years. Wears a sack suit in Act I, and in Act II a sailor-suit.

LOVE'S SERVICE FLAG

ACT I

SCENE: *Living-Room in the DEWITT RALEIGH'S home. An attractive and well-furnished room. Door L. from hall; door R. to other rooms. At rear a window overlooks the street. A long table at center, bearing wool, bandages and other material of the Red Cross workers. Red Cross placards hang on the wall at rear. A desk at L. front bears a telephone. Six chairs. In the window hangs a service-flag with one star. Morning. Full light.*

DISCOVERED: CLARA, *a small package in her hand, stands rear, waving her handkerchief from window. As she blows a kiss through the window, MADELEINE DEWITT enters R. and sees her.*

MADELEINE. Clara!

CLARA. It's Joe I'm waving to, Miss Madeleine; it's me Joe. *(She holds up the package)* See, he's brought us another pound of sugar.

MADELEINE. I don't know what we'd do for sugar if you hadn't made a conquest of the grocer's young-man, Clara. This sugar shortage is abominable!

CLARA. Joe's promised to bring a pound of sugar every other day, ma'm.

MADELEINE. Three pounds a week! Splendid!

CLARA. Oh, there's plenty of sugar where there's true love, Miss Madeleine.

(*A bell rings.*)

MADELEINE. Answer the bell.

CLARA. Yes'm. (*She sighs deeply and exits L.*)

MADELEINE. True love! It's scarcer than sugar! (*She takes a letter from the table and puckers her brow as she tries to read it. FAITH EVANS runs in L. with knitting-bag*)

FAITH. Am I the first one here, Madeleine? (*Puts bag on table*)

MADELEINE. Yes. We don't begin our Red Cross work until ten, Faith.

FAITH. I came early. I want your advice. I'm in trouble.

MADELEINE. So am I. Here's a letter from my brother—somewhere in France—and the Censor has slashed it so, I can't make head nor tail of it.

FAITH. I don't see how you stand the strain of having a brother in the army,—and in France.

MADELEINE. Why, Faith! How do you expect to stand the strain of having your fiancé in France? Major Anderson sails this week, doesn't he?

FAITH. That's it, Madeleine, I *can't* stand it! I want to break my engagement with Major Anderson.

MADELEINE. (*Shocked*) Faith! You don't mean that!

FAITH. No, I don't! I mean—I want *you* to break my engagement for me!

MADELEINE. No, thanks! Wait a few days, Faith; think this over.

FAITH. I *can't* wait! Gerry says he'll enlist in the navy if I don't accept him this afternoon.

MADELEINE. Gerry! So there's another man!

FAITH. Well—you-see—of course there is! Gerald Van Zandt.

MADELEINE. That boy?

FAITH. He's twenty-one, and—Oh Madeleine, I'm not the wife for Major Anderson, truly I'm not. Mother and the moonlight simply threw me at his head. I'd known him only a week and I haven't seen him for three months! When you meet Major Anderson you'll realize how unsuited we are for one another. He's coming here to-day, Madeleine.

MADELEINE. Does Gerry know you're engaged to Major Anderson?

FAITH. No, and he mustn't; I told Gerry he was the first man I'd ever kissed! *Please* talk with the Major, Madeleine, and persuade him to release me.

MADELEINE. No. Take my advice, and wait!

FAITH. I told Gerry that if he enlisted, I'd never marry him. Gerry says he'll enlist if I don't accept him this afternoon. I *can't* accept him until I've broken off with Major Anderson. And I haven't the courage to face Major Anderson!

(CLARA enters L., followed by GERALD VAN ZANDT.)

CLARA. Mr. Van Zandt. (CLARA exits L. as GERALD crosses to FAITH)

GERALD. Look here, Faith, you left your house by the back door,—that wasn't fair! You promised me your answer to-day; give it to me.

FAITH. This afternoon! I can't give you an answer before.

GERALD. Why not? (FAITH points to MADELEINE; GERALD turns and sees her) Oh, good morning, Miss Raleigh, I didn't see you.

MADELEINE. I surmised as much! Can you make out this letter? It's from my brother in France.

GERALD. (Takes the letter) Lord, I wish I was with the boys in France! (Reads) "Am sending

you a—" blank, slash—" which I captured." Blank, slash, "souvenir"—blank, slash, "trust in your hands." *I have it! He's sending you a souvenir which he captured in battle,—a German helmet, probably, and he wants you to take good care of it.*

MADELEINE. I suppose that's it.

GERALD. Faith, why don't you want me to enlist?

FAITH. I should die a dozen deaths a day thinking of your danger.

GERALD. Then you *do* love me?

FAITH. No, no, That is,—I'll give you your answer this afternoon!

CLARA. (*Enters L.*) Major Anderson has called.

FAITH. (*Panic-struck sits down, rises, trembles*) Madeleine, I feel faint—your room—may I powder my nose? Oh, Heavens! (*She rushes out R. as MAJOR ANDERSON enters L. CLARA exits L.*)

MADELEINE. How do you do, Major Anderson. I—(*She looks at GERALD and smiles*) I hardly know what to say!

GERALD. My name is Gerry Van Zandt. What can we do for you?

ANDERSON. I came here to see my fiancée. (*He crosses to MADELEINE*)

GERALD. Your fiancée? Here? (*Smiles suddenly*) Oh, I say, Miss Raleigh—congratulations! You and Major Anderson engaged! You're a deep one, all right. What a dolt I am to stay here in the way. Two's a company, three's a crime! You've won a blue-ribbon, Major! Congratulations, congratulations! (*He laughs, holds up both hands in blessing and exits L. MADELEINE, angry, stamps her foot*)

ANDERSON. Why didn't you deny it? Why did you let him think we were engaged?

MADELEINE. Forgive me, please! I—I can't

explain. Only don't think I *want* to be engaged to you. I don't. (*As he smiles at her*) Why didn't you deny it?

ANDERSON. Oh—er—I thought it might be a case of love at first sight.

MADELEINE. Did you? Well, I don't expect to be able to detect love till I'm gifted with second-sight! I wasn't trying to win you from Miss Evans.

ANDERSON. Then you know of my engagement to Miss Evans?

MADELEINE. Faith is my best friend. She's here, Major Anderson, but she's very much upset. We have our Red Cross meeting this morning. If you could return in half an hour——?

ANDERSON. With pleasure. Tell Faith I called. (*Crosses to door, L.*)

MADELEINE. Major Anderson, may I warn you, in all kindness, to be prepared for a great shock?

(CLARA enters L.)

CLARA. Miss Letetia Butts. (*As ANDERSON turns to door L., LETETIA enters L.*)

LETETIA. A soldier! (*She takes both his hands*) Have you a Mother?

ANDERSON. Madam, I have, I have! (*Frees himself, speaks aside to MADELEINE*) I got the shock, all right!

LETETIA. I've adopted ten boys in the army and six in the navy, but I have enough letter-paper and woolen-yarn for a few more. I write letters to cheer their lonely hearts, and knit socks to warm their chilly feet. My only regret is that I've never seen any of my boys; I've adopted them all by correspondence.

ANDERSON. Madam, your correspondence-course in motherhood is a patriotic performance; I commend it.

LETETIA. If only I could *meet* one of my boys; but a cheery smile helps, even when absent.

ANDERSON. (*Looks at her as she smirks*) Especially when absent!

MADELEINE. Our Red Cross Chapter has adopted a baby by *wireless*,—a French orphan; we expect it next week.

ANDERSON. Bravo for the Chapter! In half an hour, then.

MADELEINE. Clara, Major Anderson is leaving.

CLARA. This way, sir. (*CLARA exits L. followed off by ANDERSON*)

LETETIA. Tom—he's one of my boys—promised to come and see me when he got leave from camp. I hope his eyes are brown. (*She simpers*) Madeleine, do you think I might kiss Tom?

MADELEINE. You might,—it depends upon how agile Tom is!

(*FAITH looks in from R.*)

FAITH. Has the Major gone?

MADELEINE. For half an hour. (*FAITH enters R. she and MADELEINE look at LETETIA, as LETETIA holds up a gray sock and sighs*)

LETETIA. No, I hope Tom's eyes are gray: then they'll match his socks.

MADELEINE. (*Aside to FAITH*) Miss Butts wants to meet one of her adopted sons,—she shall! I'll put on that old uniform of my brother's and introduce myself as Tom!

FAITH. Pass yourself off as a soldier? What fun—until Miss Butts finds you out!

MADELEINE. She won't find me out. Don't let her go until I appear. I'll slip away presently. (*Looks R. as a voice sounds off-stage*) Mother! What is it?

(MRS. RALEIGH enters R.—an open telegram in her hand.)

MRS. RALEIGH. The French baby has arrived! It reached New York last evening, and they sent it out by train this morning,—to my husband's office!

LETETIA. Our Red Cross baby! Have you the crib ready, Mrs. Raleigh?

MRS. RALEIGH. My husband absolutely refuses to have the baby in this house.

MADELEINE. I've argued with Father by the hour,—he won't let us keep the baby here.

FAITH. *Some-one* must take the baby!

(Telephone rings: MRS. RALEIGH answers it.)

MRS. RALEIGH. Hello. (*To the others*) It's my husband. (*In phone*) Oh! Is it crying? (*To others*) The baby's there—at my husband's office. (*In phone*) Oh, DeWitt! My dear! You will?—Send it here at once. (*Hangs up receiver*) My husband says I can keep the baby here! He says it's the prettiest little thing he ever saw. The baby has won my husband's heart! He says he won't let *anyone else* have it. DeWitt is *kindness* itself!

LETETIA. That's settled! Go and hunt up your old toys, Madeleine, the baby must have something to play with.

MADELEINE. I will. (*Aside to FAITH*) And I'll come back as soldier Tom! (*She exits R. with a laugh*)

FAITH. Now to work! (*The three sit at the table*)

MRS. RALEIGH. I called this special meeting to devise a method for swelling the Red Cross funds. I don't believe we're a quorum, but I'm sure everyone will agree with whatever we decide. I suggest that we have a play.

LETETIA. I think tableaux would be more popular: famous women or patriotic groups. I'll do *my* bit,—either as Columbia or Cleopatra!

FAITH. Why not have a bazaar, and sell kisses at five dollars each. That always brings the men.

LETETIA. (*Simpers*) Don't you think five dollars is rather high?

FAITH. That all depends! But tableaux are more fun. I second the tableaux.

MRS. RALEIGH. It's agreed, then,—we have tableaux! Women In War.

LETETIA. Splendid. We can curtain off that part of the room (*points R.*) and have the tableaux here. Can we rehearse this afternoon, Mrs. Raleigh?

MRS. RALEIGH. If you wish. And we can sell tea and cake.

LETETIA. Tea? Where will we get the sugar to sweeten it?

MRS. RALEIGH. We have plenty of sugar. Clara, the maid, is receiving the attentions of the grocer's young man, so our supply of sugar is regular and assured. I can let you and Faith have what sugar you need, Letetia.

(CLARA *enters* L. *angry*. *Stops, hands on hips.*)

CLARA. Mrs. Raleigh, ma'm. If I'm to be annoyed by the grocer's young man, I'll have to leave. Joe's at the back door again, and he won't go!

MRS. RALEIGH. Clara! I thought you and Joe were as good as engaged.

CLARA. We were! I saw him kissing the Simpkins' girl. It's all off between us. I've told him never to speak to me again. (*She folds her arms*)

MRS. RALEIGH. (*Rises*) If you break with Joe, we won't get any more sugar! I mean you must be sensible, Clara: forgive Joe.

FAITH. (*Rises*) Yes, I'm sure it wasn't his fault.

LETETIA. (*Rises*) Forgive him for the sake of the Red Cross tea, Clara.

CLARA. (*As the three surround her, urgent*) The Simpkins' girl indeed!

MRS. RALEIGH. It's your *duty* to forgive him: Joe's a man in a thousand. Didn't he explain his action?

CLARA. He said he kissed the Simpkins' girl because I refused to give him a kiss! She has red hair, too!

FAITH. Then *you're* to blame, Clara, for refusing to kiss Joe. What harm is there in a kiss?

LETETIA. None at all! A kiss sweetens life just as sugar sweetens tea.

MRS. RALEIGH. Love is the sugar of existence, Clara; we can't get along without sugar,—I mean, without love.

CLARA. (*Wipes eye with apron*) You're right, ma'm; Joe's a sweet man.

FAITH. The sweetest man I ever heard of!

LETETIA. Ask him to forgive you, Clara.

MRS. RALEIGH. Tell him we can't get along without—er—without having him happy.

CLARA. I will, ma'm, I'll tell him he can have one little lump of a kiss if he never looks at the Simpkins' girl again. But if he doesn't forgive me, ma'm?

MRS. RALEIGH. Then your life will be as bitter as our tea!

CLARA. (*Calls off*) Joe! Joe, me lad! (*She exits L. The other three cross to door L., listening. A pause. Then the smack of a kiss sounds off-stage. All three smile, relieved, and speak at once.*)

MRS. RALEIGH, FAITH and LETETIA. Sugar!

MRS. RALEIGH. Our supply of sugar is safe!

(*As they move back to the table, MARTHA DAW-*

SON *enters L. with a package in her arms. She stops by the door. The others see her, surprised.*)

FAITH. What can we do for you, my good woman?

MARTHA. I beg your pardon: I'm Mrs. Dawson. I live down on Depot Street.

MRS. RALEIGH. Oh, yes, your husband worked for us before he died. Have you something to sell?

MARTHA. I've brought some scarfs and sweaters that I knit for our boys in France. I thought you might send them with those the Red Cross is sending. *(She lays package on table).*

FAITH. How fine of you! Of course we'll send them.

MRS. RALEIGH. How did you ever get time for all this work?

MARTHA. I made time. *(Looks rear)* I see you have a service-flag.

MRS. RALEIGH. My son is with the American forces in France. Stay and work with us, Mrs. Dawson.

LETETIA. *We're* working hard, too; we're getting up tableaux—Women In War.

MARTHA. Women in war! What a big part our women play in the war. Next to the men on the fighting line they render the greatest service our country receives,—the service of love: unselfish love. The love that gives without stint, without question, without regret. I think of women's work in war as symbolized by a great flag, a flag spangled with millions of stars,—Love's service-flag.

FAITH. Love's Service-Flag!

LETETIA. A splendid title for our tableaux!

MARTHA. At night I see the flag in the starlit heavens, a flag that reaches from one end of the

country to the other,—and every twinkling star is a woman's service,—the sacrifice of self—or husband—or son.' (*Her voice breaks and she sinks to a chair. CLARA enters L.*)

CLARA. Mother of Heaven, the French baby's here!

MRS. RALEIGH. Our Red Cross baby! Get the crib, the toys, Clara.

LETETIA. Is it a boy or a girl?

CLARA. It's a girl. It's name is Fifi!

FAITH. Fifi! Bring the baby in!

CLARA. She's bringing herself in!

FAITH, MRS. RALEIGH and LETETIA. What?

CLARA. Miss Fifi D'Anvers. (*FIFI enters L. and looks from one to the other as FAITH, MRS. RALEIGH and LETETIA gasp with astonishment*)

FIFI. It is I—your liddle Fifi!

MRS. RALEIGH. Fifi? (*Sits down suddenly*)

FAITH. Our Red Cross baby! (*Laughs*)

LETETIA. There's some mistake.

FIFI. Non, non, I come all ze way from France to leeve weeth you! Wheech one of you is my American Mama? (*She approaches LETETIA with outstretched arms. LETETIA dodges around the table and points to MRS. RALEIGH*)

LETETIA. It's Mrs. Raleigh you're to stay with!

FIFI. (*To MRS. RALEIGH*) Je vous aime, je vous adore! My American Mama! (*She throws her arms about MRS. RALEIGH and kisses her*)

MRS. RALEIGH. (*Frees herself, upset*) You can't stay here, it's out of the question.

FAITH. Your husband *said* she could stay here, Mrs. Raleigh, he said he wouldn't let her stay anywhere else!

LETETIA. He called her the prettiest little thing he ever saw!

FAITH. She won his heart, you said so!

LETETIA. Yes,—your husband is *kindness* itself!

MRS. RALEIGH. (*To FIFI*) There's been a mistake; they were to send us a baby.

FIFI. Non, there ees no mistake. I am your baby. Do you not recognize me? T'twitt, t'witt!

MRS. RALEIGH. What does she mean?

LETETIA. She thinks she's an owl.

FIFI. Non, non, not ze owl! T'witt, t'witt!

FAITH. T'witt, t'woo!

FIFI. Oui, oui,—t'woo. T'twitt!

MRS. RALEIGH. (*Aside*) She's out of her head.

MARTHA. She's trying to tell you something. Perhaps she is hungry. (*To FIFI*) Avez vous faim, ma chérie?

FIFI. J'ai faim pour l'amour!

FAITH. She hungers for love!

CLARA. Mother of Heaven!

MARTHA. She means mother-love.

MRS. RALEIGH. How do we know what kind of love she means? One never knows about these French girls. We must investigate her antecedents before we accept her as our protégée.

LETETIA. Decidedly. I must safe-guard Tom's moral welfare!

FAITH. Why, she's nothing but a child, Mrs. Raleigh. (*To FIFI*) Don't distress yourself, Fifi, you're among friends.

FIFI. (*Dabs eyes with handkerchief*) T'witt, t'witt!

LETETIA. There she goes again!

MRS. RALEIGH. You're tired after your long trip. Clara, take Miss Fifi into the dining-room and see that she has something to eat.

FIFI. Mon Dieu, eef I am among friends, why does not my American Mama lock me to her heart wiz ze passionate rapture, smother me weeth affection on her welcoming heart? Mon Dieu, I die weeth despair! T'witt, t'witt! (*She sobs and exits*.)

LETETIA. I'll watch her. (*She exits L.*)

CLARA. (*Flaps her arms like an owl's wings*)
T'witt, t'woo: t'witt, t'woo! (*She exits L.*)

MRS. RALEIGH. (*To MARTHA, as MARTHA starts to go*) Don't leave, Mrs. Dawson: you can help us with the costumes for our tableaux, if you will? Come upstairs.

MARTHA. I'll be glad to help, Mrs. Raleigh. I'm sure Miss Fifi is nothing but a baby at heart.

MRS. RALEIGH. That remains to be seen! (*She exits R. followed off by MARTHA. FAITH laughs and straightens the things on the table. MADELEINE enters R. dressed in a khaki uniform, with puttees and service-hat. FAITH looks up, startled*)

FAITH. Oh! What do you want?

MADELEINE. I'm Private Tom come to see Miss Letetia Butts.

FAITH. *Madeleine!* (*Laughs*) Miss Letetia's in the dining-room; I'll get her. She'll be in the seventh heaven of delight!

MADELEINE. Yes. Tell her sonny Tom is here, impatient to meet his darling war-mother.

(*FAITH starts L. MAJOR ANDERSON'S voice sounds off-stage.*)

ANDERSON. (*Off-stage*) Miss Evans is expecting me.

FAITH. (*Alarmed*) It's Major Anderson! (*She runs to door R. MADELEINE stands in front of door, barring the way*) Let me by! Quickly!

MADELEINE. No. Stay and face him. You can't escape this time. I won't break your engagement for you, Faith, and break his heart as well. Do it yourself!

FAITH. Never! (*She dives under the table where she is hidden by the cloth, just as MAJOR ANDERSON enters L. He speaks as he enters*)

ANDERSON. Don't announce me. Not here? Hello, who's this?

MADELEINE. (*Gruffly*) I'm Private Tom, I belong to Miss Letetia!

ANDERSON. Indeed! (*He crosses to MADELEINE*) Well?

MADELEINE. Well?

ANDERSON. You've got your nerve with you!

MADELEINE. That's the truest thing you ever said.

ANDERSON. (*Angry*) Salute your superior officer!

MADELEINE. Oh! Salute you?

ANDERSON. Yes, salute me! Do you want to be sent to the guard-house? What camp were you trained in?

MADELEINE. You needn't be so unpleasant about it!

ANDERSON. Unpleasant? Ha! That's good! Salute your superior officer, do you hear? (*He grips her arm*)

MADELEINE. Ouch! (*She salutes quickly and turns on ANDERSON as he releases her*) There, I hope you're satisfied, because now I'm going to break your heart! You deserve to have it broken, you brute!

ANDERSON. You dare? (*He starts toward her, angry. MADELEINE runs around the table to escape him. LETETIA enters L. MADELEINE runs to her for protection, getting behind her*)

MADELEINE. I'm Tom, Miss Letetia, I'm your Tom; save me!

LETETIA. Tom! (*To ANDERSON*) Stop! You shan't touch my Tom, my army son!

ANDERSON. If the fellow doesn't mind his tongue, he'll be dismissed from the service. (*LETETIA puts her arms about MADELEINE. MRS. RALEIGH and MARTHA enter R. and stop, shocked*)

MRS. RALEIGH. Letetia Butts!

LETETIA. It's Tom!

(CLARA hurries in L. excited.)

CLARA. Miss Fifi's going on something awful about love; she won't eat a thing. Here she comes.

(FIFI enters L.)

FIFI. Non, non, you do not love me, I go back to la belle France unless—(*She breaks off with a startled scream as she sees MADELEINE*) Ah, eet ess my soldier, my lover; my lover, my adored one! (*She runs to MADELEINE, throws both arms about her and kisses her. LETETIA tries to pull FIFI away from MADELEINE as MRS. RALEIGH throws up her hands with horror*)

MRS. RALEIGH. This is the innocent baby!

LETETIA. Leave Tom alone,—Tom belongs to me!

(FAITH, interested, looks out from under the table.

GERALD VAN ZANDT enters L. hat in hand.

FIFI still embraces MADELEINE.)

FIFI. My soldier, my lover; my lover, my fiancé! (*MADELEINE attempts to free herself; her hat falls off and her hair falls down over her shoulders. FIFI releases her, astonished*)

LETETIA. (*Shocked*) Madeleine!

FIFI. A girl!

ANDERSON. Ye gods!

GERALD. (*To FIFI*) Your fiancé? It's Major Anderson's fiancée!

MRS. RALEIGH. What do you say? My daughter engaged to Major Anderson?

GERALD. Yes,—a secret engagement!

(FAITH, angry, climbs out from under the table as MADELEINE stutters a protest.)

ANDERSON. Faith!

FAITH. (To MADELEINE) So this is your friendship! You've been engaged to Major Anderson all along!

ANDERSON. Faith, I can explain. Listen to me.

FAITH. Don't speak to me! (She flouts ANDERSON and crosses to GERALD)

ANDERSON. (Turns angrily to MADELEINE) Tell Miss Evans the truth!

MADELEINE. I feel faint—I (She reels. ANDERSON catches her in his arms as her senses leave her)

MRS. RALEIGH. It is true! Bless you, dear children, bless you! (She raises her hands in blessing over ANDERSON and MADELEINE; ANDERSON, helpless, mutters an oath as he supports MADELEINE'S limp form. FIFI, tearful, crosses to MARTHA as LETETIA picks up MADELEINE'S service-hat and presses it to her heart. GERALD puts his arm about FAITH, and CLARA, at rear, raises her hands in astonishment)

Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE: *The Same. Afternoon of the same day. The big table has been removed, and draw curtains have been hung across the stage at rear, on a line back of the two doors. The curtains are drawn back by means of a cord at R. and open to either side with the effect of a theatre curtain.*

DISCOVERED: MAJOR ANDERSON and MADELEINE RALEIGH seated center in earnest conversation. MADELEINE wears her own dress again. The curtains at rear are pulled open, showing the full depth of the room.

ANDERSON. Now that I've spent half a day in your company, I wish it were true, I wish we really were engaged.

MADELEINE. Do you want to break Faith's heart? Faith believes in you implicitly. If you cease to care for her, she may do something desperate.

ANDERSON. Do you think so?

MADELEINE. I'm sure of it. I've told everyone our engagement was camouflage; now you must make it up with Faith.

ANDERSON. I'm not the husband for Faith Evans, really I'm not, Miss Raleigh. Her mother made the match. I can't believe Faith will be anything but relieved when I ask her to release me,—for that's what I'm going to do. And then—what will you think of me?

MADELEINE. As a soldier or a diplomat?

ANDERSON. As a prospective husband.

MADELEINE. I haven't any prospective husband.

ANDERSON. Every girl has!

MADELEINE. I've made up my mind never to marry.

ANDERSON. I accept that challenge. As soon as I'm free to do so, I shall take you in my arms and capture you with a kiss.

MADELEINE. Indeed! (*She rises with a stamp of her foot*) In that case I shall take good care not to be left alone with you; for a man who would deliberately crush the heart of an innocent and trusting girl like Faith Evans is capable of *anything*! (FAITH enters R. At the sight of ANDERSON, but MADELEINE catches her by the arm and whispers in her ear)

He loves you madly, Faith; don't break with him.

FAITH. (*Low to MADELEINE*) I must break with him or I'll lose Gerry.

MADELEINE. Careful, he may do something desperate. (*Aloud*) I know you two have something important to say to each other; I'll leave you alone. (*She exits R. with a laugh.* ANDERSON and FAITH, both anxious to break their engagement, but each afraid to hurt the other's feelings, regard one another, embarrassed)

ANDERSON. Faith.

FAITH. Major Anderson. (*A pause. Then both speak together*)

ANDERSON and FAITH. I have something to say to you!

ANDERSON. (*Clears his throat after another pause*) Sit here.

FAITH. Thank you. (*She sits herself uneasily*)

ANDERSON. What would you do if you lost the man you loved devotedly?

FAITH. I should die of grief!

ANDERSON. Great Heavens!

FAITH. But I'm not going to lose him!

ANDERSON. No, no, of course not. (*Aside*) I'm afraid to ask her to release me!

FAITH. What would you do if the girl you loved turned against you?

ANDERSON. I should be embittered for life! But she's not going to turn against me!

FAITH. No, no, of course not. (*Aside*) I'm afraid to break our engagement! (*Aloud*) Do you believe in long engagements?

ANDERSON. I think the shorter ours is, the better?

FAITH. (*Alarmed*) Promise me one thing, Major Anderson; promise me you won't pick me up and run away with me.

ANDERSON. I promise! I promise gladly!

FAITH. I suppose—I suppose I ought to reward you with a kiss.

ANDERSON. A kiss? Oh yes, you mean—you mean—a kiss. (*He nears FAITH slowly. FAITH shuts both eyes and screws up her features as if about to take a dose of bitter medicine. ANDERSON wipes his brow, hesitates, then leans toward FAITH gingerly. As he is about to kiss her, GERALD VAN ZANDT enters L. wearing a naval uniform. ANDERSON and FAITH separate quickly as GERALD speaks sharply*)

GERALD. Major Anderson! This is the girl I hope to marry! (*FAITH runs to GERALD with a cry of relief*)

ANDERSON. You hope to marry? Faith, you care for this man?

FAITH. Yes. Please don't do anything desperate!

ANDERSON. (*Laughs with relief*) Ha, ha,—I could dance a break-down!

FAITH. What, you're glad?

ANDERSON. It's a great disappointment to find you love another, but—where's Miss Raleigh?

FAITH. You care for Madeleine?

ANDERSON. Yes. Please don't do anything desperate! (*Laughs and calls off*) Miss Raleigh, Madeleine. (*He exits R.*)

GERALD. You will marry me, Faith?

FAITH. Yes. (*She slips away from him as he starts to embrace her*) But why are you wearing that uniform? Are you trying to frighten me?

GERALD. I've joined the navy, Faith.

FAITH. Then I won't marry you! You must choose between me and war, I told you that!

GERALD. Do you want a coward for a husband?

FAITH. No, but I'd rather have a coward than a corpse! Can't you get out of enlisting?

GERALD. I might, I don't know. It will be worse than death to lose you, Faith.

FAITH. You must choose between me and war!

GERALD. I love you more than all the world. Faith, but I'm going to war.

FAITH. Never speak to me again! Not a word! You don't love me, that's the truth! When the submarines get you, Gerald Van Zandt, you'll think of me and be sorry! (FIFI D'ANVERS enters L. FAITH looks at her) But no doubt *Fifi* will console you,—she adores men who fight?

GERALD. Great idea! How about it, Miss *Fifi*?

(FAITH, angry, stamps her foot and goes, rear)

FIFI. Non, non, ze only soldier I adore ees een France; I weesh to go back to him, but Mrs. Raleigh, she declare I 'ave much to learn and zat I shall stay here and go to school.

GERALD. School? What school?

FIFI. One zat she calls ze reform-school. What kind of a school ees zat?

GERALD. It's—it's a sort of a finishing school!

(LETETIA BUTTS enters R. with a large French flag in her hands.)

LETETIA. Now to rehearse our tableaux. You shall impersonate France, *Fifi*. (She drops the French flag about FIFI'S shoulders; then pulls the curtain cord, so that the curtains run together, shutting off the rear of the room, and FAITH, from view) This does nicely as a stage, Faith. (She steps between the curtains and out of sight)

FIFI. (Posing in the flag) How do I look, Meester Gerry?

GERALD. Good enough to kiss! (He tip-toes up behind her to kiss her. LETETIA looks out from between the curtains)

LETETIA. Run upstairs, Mr. Van Zandt, and

help Mrs. Raleigh bring down the costumes. (GERALD *nods and goes R. At door he blows a kiss to FIFI. FIFI stamps her foot. GERALD exits R. LETETIA comes out from behind the curtains. FIFI removes the French flag from her own shoulders and drapes it about LETETIA*)

FIFI. Eet ees you who should be la belle France, Miss Butts, you 'ave ze so majestic figure!

LETETIA. You really think so, Fifi? (*She poses in the flag. FIFI slips between the curtains and out of sight. GERALD enters R. with an armful of costumes. LETETIA has her back to him. GERALD thinks the flag-draped figure is FIFI. He tip-toes up behind her, leans over quickly and kisses LETETIA on the cheek. Just as he does so, MRS. RALEIGH, MADELEINE and MARTHA DAWSON enter R. carrying flags and costumes for the tableaux, and FAITH and FIFI come out from between the curtains. They all laugh as GERALD recognizes LETETIA and staggers back*)

LETETIA. Mr. Van Zandt! Gerry!

GERALD. Miss Letetia!

MRS. RALEIGH. What does this mean?

LETETIA. (*Simpers*) Can it have any but *one* meaning?

GERALD. No. It means I want Miss Butts to be a mother to me! A war-mother!

LETETIA. (*Disappointed*) Was *that* what you meant?

MADELEINE. He'll take Tom's place, Miss Butts. Now for Love's Service-Flag,—our series of tableaux. All ready, everybody. (MADELEINE, MARTHA, FIFI and GERALD *step behind the curtains and out of sight. The telephone rings. LETETIA answers it*)

LETETIA. Hello—It's for Clara. (*She calls off L.*) Clara! (CLARA *enters L. and takes the phone*). (To MRS. RALEIGH) Joe's promised me *five* pounds

of sugar to-morrow, Mrs. Raleigh! (*In phone*) Hello. Who is it?—Mrs. Brown?—Oh, that's fine! Just hold the line a bit and I'll tell ye. (*To MRS. RALEIGH*) Mrs. Brown's offering me five dollars more a month if I'll leave here and go to work for her!

MRS. RALEIGH. Leave here? Clara, we can't lose you!

LETETIA. Not with five pounds of sugar due to-morrow!

FAITH. (*Aside to MRS. RALEIGH*) Mrs. Brown has learned that Clara's young man works for the grocer.

MRS. RALEIGH. (*Aside to FAITH*) I pay Clara all she's worth, but we need the sugar! (*To CLARA*) You've given such faithful service, Clara, that I shall raise your wages six dollars a month. Tell Mrs. Brown that you intend to stay here.

CLARA. Mrs. Brown says her kitchen is much nicer to receive my young man in; and her work isn't as hard, either. You couldn't give me that yellow silk dress of yours, ma'm, could you?

MRS. RALEIGH. This is blackmail! Very well, Clara, if you'll stay, I'll give you my yellow silk dress.

CLARA. And there's the hat with the plumes in it.

MRS. RALEIGH. No, you shan't have the hat!

CLARA. (*In phone*) I think I'll accept your offer, Mrs. Brown—

MRS. RALEIGH. No, no, Clara,—take the hat, too! We can't get along without you!

CLARA. Oh, thank you, Mrs. Raleigh. (*In phone*) No, I can't work for you, Mrs. Brown—There's no argufication, ma'm. The yellow-silk and the plumed hat is the final word! (*She hangs up the receiver*)

FAITH. (*Aside*) Sugar comes high!

MRS. RALEIGH. But we must have it!

FAITH. Now for our rehearsal. Our first tableaux is DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY. (FAITH pulls the curtain-cord and parts the curtains half way. An American flag has been hung over the window. Before it stand MADELEINE, dressed as Columbia, and FIFI, dressed as France, their arms over each other's shoulders. CLARA sits L. front and applauds loudly. MRS. RALEIGH sits at R. She and FAITH applaud. FAITH closes the curtains again)

FAITH. The next is THE MOTHER'S GIFT. (She pulls the curtains open again, showing GERALD between MARTHA and MADELEINE; MARTHA, the mother, offering her son to Columbia. The others applaud, and FAITH closes the curtains)

NOTE: Here, if desired, a series of patriotic tableaux may be introduced, using any available number of girls and men. If this is to be done, the extra characters should enter R. when MADELEINE says "All ready, everybody," Page 25. They should go behind the curtain at once. They should come out from behind the curtain and exit L. after the curtain closes. At conclusion of the extra tableaux, if used, FIFI comes out from behind the curtains, in her own dress.

FIFI. I can stand siz no longer, I want ze love an' not ze finizhing-school! I bid you adieu. I go back to my France! Oh, t'witt, t'witt!

(MADELEINE and GERALD come out from behind the curtains.)

MADELEINE. Wait, Fifi. Why did you call me your fiancé when I wore a uniform?

FIFI. You were ze living image of ze man I am engaged to marry. T'witt, t'witt!

MADELEINE. Why do you keep saying t'witt?

FIFI. Eet ees ze name of my fiancé, ze man who adore me, who tell me his mother adore me, too.

MADELEINE. You don't mean—deWitt?

FIFI. Oui, oui,—T'witt, T'witt.

MADELEINE. My brother, deWitt! Mother, it's the girl deWitt is engaged to marry!

MRS. RALEIGH. Do you recognize this photograph of my son? (*She takes a photograph from the desk and shows it to FIFI. FIFI takes it with a happy cry and presses it to her lips*)

FIFI. Eet ess he! My lover, my fiancé. My adored T'witt!

MADELEINE. No wonder you thought I looked like him. We *do* look alike!

MRS. RALEIGH. You are engaged to marry my son?

FIFI. 'Ave I not again an' again tell you so? He write you zat he was sending me to you, he call me his leetle souvenir, he say he captured me.

MADELEINE. Yes, that's what he said in the letter that was censored; we couldn't make head nor tail of it. We thought you were the Red Cross baby!

FIFI. (*To MRS. RALEIGH*) See, I wear his ring. You know it?

MRS. RALEIGH. (*As she looks at the ring which FIFI wears*) My son's ring! So, little Fifi, you are to be my daughter. (*She takes FIFI in her arms*)

FIFI. My American Mama! (*She kisses MRS. RALEIGH*)

MRS. RALEIGH. You shall never starve for love again. Come. (*MRS. RALEIGH and FIFI exit R. ANDERSON enters R. bowing as he lets MRS. RALEIGH pass. MADELEINE sees ANDERSON, puts her fingers on her lips and steps between the curtains and out of sight*)

ANDERSON. Is Miss Raleigh here?

CLARA. This way, sir! (*CLARA exits L.*)

ANDERSON. I'll find Miss Raleigh if I have to camp here for a week! (*He crosses and exits L. after CLARA. MADELEINE comes out from between the curtains, runs R. with a laugh, and exits R.*)

GERALD. Faith, won't you repent and say you'll marry me?

FAITH. You must choose between me and war!

(*MARTHA comes quietly out from between the curtains.*)

MARTHA. (*To FAITH*) If you really loved him, you would want him to go to war.

FAITH. Have you a son at the front, Mrs. Dawson?

MARTHA. No.

FAITH. It's easy for you to talk as you do, when you have no one to lose. You don't know what a great love it takes to make such a sacrifice.

MARTHA. Look. (*She shows a medal which she wears pinned on her waist*)

GERALD. An army service-medal.

MARTHA. It was taken from the breast of my son—who was killed on a battlefield in France. And I am *glad* that he died fighting for his country. (*MARTHA moves R. FAITH hesitates, then turns to GERALD*)

FAITH. Gerry, I *will* marry you!

GERALD. And let me go to war?

FAITH. I *want* you to go.

GERALD. Faith! (*As he takes her in his arms, LETETIA sticks her head out from between the curtains*)

LETETIA. You faithless boy! (*She comes out from behind the curtains in her own dress. FIFI and MRS. RALEIGH enter R., their arms about one another. LETETIA addresses them*) I think we

should end our tableaux with a spectacular battle-picture entitled VICTORY or THE SURPRISE ENGAGEMENT.

MRS. RALEIGH. The Surprise Engagement?

LETETIA. Yes. We can—*(She is interrupted by a crash of breaking-glass. They all turn, startled. FIFI pulls the curtain-cord; the curtains slide open showing MADELEINE in the arms of MAJOR ANDERSON. Back of them the window is seen in fragments)*

GERALD. The surprise engagement!

(ANDERSON releases MADELEINE.)

MRS. RALEIGH. I hope it is an engagement this time, Major Anderson!

ANDERSON. I hope so. *(To MADELEINE)* What do you say, Madeleine?

MADELEINE. *Salute your superior officer! (She raises her face to his. As ANDERSON starts to kiss her, CLARA enters L. wearing the yellow silk dress and the plumed hat)*

CLARA. It's the grand news I've got for ye, Mrs. Raleigh! Me Joe's left the grocery-store and has gone and enlisted in the army!

MRS. RALEIGH. Then we'll get no more sugar! Oh, my yellow silk, my plumed hat! *(She sinks to chair)*

MADELEINE. Remember, Mother, that where there's true love, there's plenty of— —

ANDERSON, GERALD, FAITH, FIFI and LETETIA. Sugar! *(ANDERSON kisses MADELEINE; GERALD kisses FAITH; FIFI leans over and kisses MRS. RALEIGH as LETETIA raises one of GERALD's hands to her lips. CLARA takes out a vanity-box and prinks)*

Curtain.

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